

seemed to the Western kings of only local importance ; to them it appeared a better plan to recover Edessa, or win Ascalon, the key of Egypt, from the Moslems. Yet they consented finally to march against Damascus, and on the 24th of July, 1148, the three kings appeared before its walls.

The city was held by Anar, the vizir of its young prince; it was to his every interest to maintain friendship with the Pranks, since the isolated independence of Damascus was threatened by Nur-ed-dfn, son and successor of Zenki; on the other hand the reduction of the city would prove a doubtful advantage to the Prankish princes since it would destroy a useful buffer-state between Jerusalem and the Atabeg's empire, The siege was for a time hard-pressed; the Moslems displaying invincible obstinacy, and the Germans on the other side exhibiting a valour and a mode of war which impressed both friend and foe, springing from their horses when the fight began and pressing upon the foe with naked sword, the King at the head of them all, Finally the diplomacy of Anar and the double-dealing of the Syrian Pranks ended the siege. The vizir represented to the

latter that Nur»ed»dtn was within a
day's march;
(«unless you retire I will open the gates
to him;
Damascus is worth more to you in my
hands than
his; retire and I will gild over the
shame of your
retreat." Won over by such
arguments, the
Prankish princes induced the Western
kings to
move from the well-watered gardens
of the north